Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph staring on page 8, line 19 with the following paragraph:

The Fibre Channel port cards 24 and 34, together with optical transport platforms 22 and 32, such as ONS 15454 (available from Cisco Systems, Inc. of San Jose, California), form the transport interfaces 29 and 39 respectively, which provide the interfaces between the Fibre Channel elements/networks and the SONET/SDH network 20. The multi-port Fibre Channel card 24 is adapted to fit into the optical transport platform ~~32~~ 22; and the multi-port Fibre Channel card 34 is adapted to fit into the optical transport platform 32. Through the Fibre Channel port cards 24 and 34, and the platforms 22 and 32 respectively, the Fibre Channel ports 26 and 28 are interconnected to the Fibre Channel ports 36 and 38 across the SONET/SDH network transport path. The result is that there are two virtual wires for the connection between a representative Fibre Channel port at one end of the SONET/SDH network 10, say, port 26, and a representative Fibre Channel port at the other end, say, port 36.

Please replace the paragraph starting on page 10, line 10 with the following paragraph:

As explained previously, Fibre Channel protocol provides for flow control between two communicating Fibre Channel nodes with either buffer-to-buffer, or end-to-end credit management. With the transparency of the SONET/SDH transport path, the Fibre Channel ports ~~16, 18 and 26, 28~~ 26, 28 and 36, 38 perform buffer-to-buffer credit management with the simple apparent link being the SONET/SDH network 20. But Fibre Channel is sensitive to frame loss which can occur with glitches, errors and failures, i.e., "traffic hits," on the SONET/SDH network 20. Even with corrective "failovers" by which a failure in the SONET/SDH network causes the network to re-route the transport path by switching over to different links in the SONET/SDH network, Fibre Channel frames will typically be lost.

Please replace the paragraph starting on page 11, line 18 with the following paragraph:

One way to avoid this problem is to emulate the Fibre Channel credit management function at the transport interfaces 29 and 39, in particular, the port cards 24 and 34. That is, each port card 24 (34) appears as a Fibre Channel node across a link to its corresponding Fibre Channel port 26 and 28 (36 and 38) to exchange credit management information. Such

emulation insulates the Fibre Channel ports ~~16, 18 and 26, 28~~ 26, 28 and 36, 38 from failovers and traffic hits in the SONET/SDH network 20.

Please replace the paragraph starting on page 12, line 15 with the following paragraph:

To avoid or substantially mitigate this problem, the present invention provides for a quick and efficient way of notifying the Fibre Channel ports to reconfigure whenever there is a SONET/SDH failover or traffic hit. Credit management emulation by the transport interfaces ~~19 and 29~~ 29 and 39 is avoided so that the Fibre Channel buffer-to-buffer credit management is left to the Fibre Channel ports 26, 28, 36 and 38. The sooner a Fibre Channel port is notified of a link failure, the earlier the link can be recovered and traffic resumed once the SONET/SDH failure is removed. The present invention identifies SONET/SDH interruptions and indicates the same to the Fibre Channel ports so that they are able to re-establish the link in a very short time compared to Fibre Channel timeouts. The Fibre Channel ports reduce the link failure times from tens of seconds to a few milliseconds to avoid situations where buffer credits are lost and the SONET/SDH transport path runs at a very low utilization rate with reduced throughput.